

UNDERSTANDING REPRESENTATION: IMPLICATIONS FOR LEGISLATIVE STRENGTHENING

Second International Conference on Legislative Strengthening

November 2000

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ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

This short report presents highlights from the Second International Conference on Legislative Strengthening. It addresses a number of the dominant themes and issues which emerged—either from presenters or from those many conference participants who commented from the floor—in the conference sessions. Accordingly, it discusses (a) how legislatures can better reach out to constituents, civil society, and marginalized groups, (b) the manner in which globalization has influenced legislatures and legislative development, (c) a range of donor and service provider considerations, and (d) alternative approaches to legislative programming.

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- C **Rule of Law**
- C **Elections and Political Processes**
- C **Civil Society**
- C **Governance**

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1 Introduction

The Second International Conference on Legislative Strengthening took place in Wintergreen, Virginia from June 5-8, 2000. Some 165 people participated in the conference. USAID democracy officers, implementing partners, and host-country legislators and staff each accounted for about a quarter of those attending, with the remaining quarter consisting of representatives from other international donors, academics, and other interested parties. The participants hailed from some 30 nations, including many from Africa. Approximately 65 speakers, panelists, and moderators participated in the conference sessions. The conference agenda is included as an appendix of this report.

In February 1996, USAID/Bolivia and the Office of Democracy and Governance of USAID's DCHA Bureau conducted the First International Conference on Legislative Strengthening in Santa Cruz, Bolivia. The Santa Cruz conference resulted in the publication of *Best Practices from the International Conference on Legislative Strengthening* (1997).

The field of legislative strengthening has advanced considerably since that time. A growing number of legislatures are focusing on institutional development, and more donors are spending money to assist legislatures in this process. The Office of Democracy and Governance has continued to provide guidance to USAID Missions as they seek to develop more effective legislative strengthening programs. Toward that end, the DG Office can point to two major accomplishments this year. The first was publishing the *USAID Handbook on Legislative Strengthening* in February 2000, and the second was conducting the Second International Conference on Legislative Strengthening.

The Wintergreen conference focused on understanding legislatures' function of representation and determining how various political, structural, and institutional factors affect representation. Representation is considered *the* fundamental role of legislatures in democratic regimes. Legislative strengthening programs, whose ultimate purpose is to further democratization, should therefore seek ways to improve a legislature's representation function, even as they also enhance its technical capacity, effectiveness, and institutional development. In so doing, these programs help legislators (and citizens) understand how representation shapes and influences other legislative functions (lawmaking and oversight), duties, and responsibilities.

This short report is not a summary of conference sessions; rather, its purpose is to highlight a number of the dominant themes and issues which emerged—either from presenters or from those many conference participants who commented from the floor—in the conference sessions. Accordingly, it addresses (a) how legislatures can better reach out to constituents, civil society, and marginalized groups; (b) the manner in which globalization has influenced legislatures and legislative development; (c) a range of donor and service provider considerations; and (d) alternative approaches to legislative programming.

2 Representation: Major Themes and Issues

A. Legislatures Reaching Out to Constituents, Civil Society, and Marginalized Groups

Representation—what it is and how best to achieve it—was the common thread running through the conference. Participants shared valuable information and engaged in stimulating exchanges on this theme through diverse sessions and in formal and informal exchanges. Some of the major issues that emerged with regard to reaching out to constituents, civil society, and marginalized groups are summarized below.

1. Legislators' Dilemmas

Legislators face numerous dilemmas in determining how best to carry out their representation responsibilities. Consideration was given to whether they should

- Mirror views of constituents or do what they personally think is best
- Serve constituents' interests or the interests of the nation as a whole
- Weigh views of all constituents equally, or give priority to certain groups, whether they be those who are most affected by a policy, those with the most resources to make their cases known, or those who have little or no voice

2. Constituents and Civil Society

Strengthening linkages among legislators, their constituents, and civil society is a major focus of legislative strengthening programs. Conference speakers and participants described efforts to try to enhance those linkages and commented on their effectiveness.

Involving civil society in the legislature and legislative reform processes: Civil society can play a constructive role in encouraging the reform of the legislature, and engaging civil society is crucial to generating public awareness and demand for more democratic legislatures. A common thread among many speakers on this issue was the importance of donors working with civil society to help create an environment that supports a more effective legislature. In addition, there were a number of country-specific exchanges on this issue:

- A Ghanaian representative noted that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in that nation play a watchdog role through monitoring the work of the parliament. The public is invited to be involved in the lawmaking process through participation in hearings and in seminars organized by the parliament.
- Civil society groups have been an impetus for change in West Bank/Gaza where they advocate on certain issues and make their voices heard in the Palestine Legislative Council.
- A Mozambican legislator commented that NGO representatives are invited to testify at public hearings in Mozambique, that the media broadcasts legislative sessions, and that the National Assembly distributes publications to educate children and others about the legislature.

- A Bolivian participant noted that recent reforms in that nation have led to greater civic participation in public hearings and legislative meetings and that media coverage of the Congress has increased.
- A member of Mexico's House of Deputies stated that the 1997 reforms in that legislature helped to bring about not only internal changes, but also changes in the relationship between the Mexican House of Deputies and outside groups. A Mexican television channel now covers debates in both the House and the Senate, and a congressional web site and gazette provide citizens with information on proposed and enacted legislation.
- One speaker argued that the divide between Kenyan civil society and Parliament occurred because NGOs had isolated themselves from issues of parliamentary reform and were unwilling to collaborate with the parliamentary oversight committees. He even suggested that donors reconsider funding NGOs unwilling to work with the Parliament for parliamentary reform. Another Kenyan countered that NGOs had not distanced themselves from the process; on the contrary, they had been forced to remove themselves from it.

Civil society organizations (CSOs) play important roles in legislative strengthening, but conference attendees also discussed certain limits to CSOs' capacity to contribute to the legislative process. A prominent question was at what stage of assisting legislatures to become more democratic is donor support to CSOs most appropriate and for what type of activities? More than one speaker advocated for more funding to assist political parties and for reducing assistance to CSOs. One speaker noted that CSOs can be slow to organize and that they are not always the best nor the most reliable source of information for legislators. Another speaker countered that there are instances in which CSOs have proven able and willing to fill the technical assistance gap as legislatures are developing. They generate technical analysis, offer venues for committees to meet, and can lend greater credibility to the legislature as a legitimate countervailing institution to the executive. Yet another speaker stated that civil society can play a role in promoting reform when the number of legislators interested in reform is limited.

3. Women and Other Marginalized Groups

Many speakers addressed the issue of what legislatures can and should do to reach out to and assure sufficient representation of less powerful, disenfranchised groups in society. Anders Johnsson, secretary general of the Inter-parliamentary Union and keynote speaker, stated that, while there are slightly more women than men in the world today, "...barely one out of every nine MPs is a women." He blamed political parties, which he felt functioned as "bottlenecks to change," and concluded that if "...we want to achieve change, we have to raise their awareness and create the necessary political will and mechanisms that will allow for it."

At least two legislatures represented at the conference—Argentina's Congress and Mozambique's National Assembly—enjoy a much higher than average percentage of women representatives. In Mozambique 74 women are representatives, or 29.4 percent of the assembly. A Mozambican representative attributed this accomplishment to the important role women played in Mozambique's national revolution. Argentina's Congress was the second case, where it was noted that women constitute 30 percent. By law, Argentine political parties must include a specific percentage of women as candidates for office. The participant from Argentina claimed that state legislatures in his nation would shortly require that women make up 50 percent of the candidates that parties field for state legislative seats. Another participant stated that his organization had determined that women needed to achieve a critical mass of 30 percent in order to wield influence in a legislature, although a representative of another organization put that number at 15 percent.

Conference participants also brought to light that women have played important roles overseeing the activities of the military in both Argentina and Uganda.

One participant asked whether women must represent women, and other participants raised this issue more generally as one of whether representatives were obliged, or perhaps simply more likely, to represent their ascriptive (gender, ethnic, regional) characteristics. However, people often have more than one such ascriptive constituency to whom they feel loyalty, and these other loyalties can act as cross-cutting pressures and encourage representatives to find solutions to political problems that satisfy more than one constituency.

In a number of sessions, participants discussed how the needs of marginalized groups can be assured in the budget development and amendment process, whether systems for developing policies and budgets allow for opposition and alternative views to be heard, and which mechanisms exist for greater inclusion of the voices of marginalized groups and how well they work. Conference speakers presented three approaches to strengthening the voices of women in the policy and budget making process. First, a Philippine NGO, the Center for Legislative Development, works to strengthen the Philippine legislature by providing technical assistance at the same time that it plays an advocacy role for the needs of women in society. Another means suggested for addressing the needs of women was through public budget hearings in which women's groups provide input into the budget making process. Finally, a number of nations have attempted to assure that national budgets take into account the needs of women through the use of "gender budgets." Gender budgets look at the differential impact of national budgets on women and men and at the differing contributions to society that they make. Australia has been a leader in gender budgets, and other nations, such as Brazil, India, South Africa, and Tanzania, have followed its example.

Other marginalized groups: Women are not the only group for whom legislatures seek to provide special representation. Uganda sets aside a number of national level seats in the parliament for representatives of several groups in society: women, youth, salaried workers, the disabled, and the army. The drafters of Uganda's constitution believed that providing special representation for these groups would assure them a stake in Uganda's political system and encourage their support. Special representation is also meant to help society to focus on the needs of historically powerful and disenfranchised groups. The army has been granted special representation because it has historically played a destabilizing role in Uganda, and there was a perceived need to guarantee it a voice in the system. Ugandan MPs noted that in practice, special representatives tend not to focus only on their pet issues; rather, they tend to take a national outlook. They reported that the need for such special representation is a stopgap measure; as these groups are integrated better into the national policymaking process, their need for special representation will fade.

One assumption by theorists of democratization is that the experience of being in the opposition—and knowledge that the tables could turn again—will make parties newly in the majority more tolerant toward and inclusive of other parties. The case of Zambia illustrates that this assumption need not hold. In Zambia, formerly disenfranchised groups—in this case "multi-partyists" in a formerly one-party state—have not been any more inclusive of parties in the opposition. Until nine years ago, Zambia was a one-party state. When the system opened up to other parties, however, the opposition received such a large percentage of the vote (80 percent) that the political system continued to be unbalanced—this time with the formerly disenfranchised in power. Their hold on power was deepened in 1996 elections, in which opposition candidates won only 11 of 158 seats and independents won 8. The present opposition does not have the opportunity to play the role of a government-in-waiting or to act as voice of alternative opinions. At the conference, a call was made to promote space for and understanding of the constructive contribution opposition can provide.

4. Other Issues

A number of other issues arose that affect how legislatures, civil society, and citizens interact:

Changing electoral systems: Differing types of electoral systems tend to encourage or discourage close contacts between legislators and their constituents. In an effort to allow citizens more direct access to legislative decision-making, Bolivia's House of Deputies amended its electoral system so that beginning in 1997 a little over one-half of House members would be elected directly by constituents in single-member districts. Prior to this all members were elected through a party-list system in which constituents voted for a presidential candidate, and seats in congress were awarded to party members according to the percentage of votes garnered by the presidential candidate. Contrary to what many observers had expected, however, a Tinker Foundation-funded study¹ found that to date the new single-member district representatives (*uninominales*) have not been significantly more representative of their constituents than their colleagues elected to congress on party lists (*plurinominales*). The *uninomial* deputies have not been willing to vote against their political parties in the interests of their constituents. The researchers concluded that, unless Bolivian political parties became more willing to loosen their grip on political power, the congress is unlikely to become more representative of its constituents.

Electoral systems—from district magnitudes² to ballot structure to timing of elections to party primaries—are intimately tied to political party systems—from the number of parties to the degree of party fragmentation to centralization within parties. As several speakers pointed out, however, there is no magic formula of electoral rules that leads to a “best” type of electoral system. Every electoral system must balance irresolvable tensions between responsiveness of parties or elected officials and responsible government, between accountability and governability, between representation through parties based on narrow interests and representation by parties that aggregate interests broadly, between local needs and concerns and national interests and policies. Centralized, disciplined parties can usually formulate more coherent policies, but at the cost of being vulnerable to becoming out of touch with the electorates. The converse is true for decentralized parties; however, parties in democratizing countries tend to be overly centralized and removed from the voters.

Technology and representation: In recent years many legislatures have attempted to use technology to help them better communicate with and listen to society. The USAID project in Nicaragua attempted to improve communication between legislators and constituents through an interactive National Assembly web site. The system allows citizens to communicate directly with their National Assembly on a daily basis via email. The full text of laws and proposed legislation is made available via the Internet, and citizens are able to review legislation and comment on the entire lawmaking process. The Ugandan parliament's new web site is less interactive, but also allows citizens to learn about the institution and its activities.

Part of the discussion about technology centered on whether it actually made a difference in the nature or quality of representation. Speakers cautiously advised not to overestimate the impact that technology has on representation, for it tends to divide rich from poor and the educated from the uneducated. They also reminded conference attendees that technology alone cannot address many fundamental issues of representation. For example, there are limits to how much substantive lawmaking can be done via the Internet and email.

The legislature and communications media: While no one argued for restrictions on the communications media, a number of presenters noted that the press had considerable power to shape the image of legislatures, and this power could be quite influential, and in some cases harmful, to a

legislature's effectiveness. Moreover, relations between legislatures and the press are commonly conflictive. Speakers suggested training programs for the press so that those covering legislatures could better understand how they function and be able to more accurately inform the public about their activities. A number of speakers also noted that these difficulties do not rest only with the media, and legislators often need to improve their ability to interact and build better relations with media.

B. Globalization and Legislative Development

The work of legislatures and issues of legislative strengthening are becoming increasingly global in nature and scope. Keynote speaker Anders Johnsson noted that, as nations become increasingly interdependent, legislators' understanding of and involvement in international issues must increase. Legislatures are called upon to ratify national commitments made at international forums, and the decisions of legislatures often reverberate far beyond the boundaries of a nation; legislators themselves must be prepared to consider global, not just national, issues. In addition, the speed of communication, economic interdependency and the increasing complexity of developments in all fields require legislators to help the citizens of their nations to understand and cope better with the interconnections between globalization and their lives. A more informed citizenry, brought about at least partly through the increasing pace of information sharing, means that citizen demands on governments and, therefore on legislatures, is growing as well.

A speaker from the United Kingdom stated that globalization and the pre-eminence of economic factors in the development of nations made it imperative not just to strengthen political processes but to forge new forms of links between citizens and their representatives. Globalization has changed the nature of politics in the United Kingdom, diminishing the relevance of the old left-right debates that used to distinguish parties. British politics are now increasingly a battle over which party is most competent to manage the nation's economy and ensure its successful integration into rapidly changing global market structures. Public relations, charisma, and better constituent relations (more commonly considered characteristics of presidential single-member district systems) are increasingly important. Globalization, by changing in part the ease of access to information, is also changing the way business is done in Uganda's parliament (as well as elsewhere), with legislative staff obtaining an ever increasing amount of information from the Internet.

The theme of globalization—or at least regionalization—was especially important to African delegations present at the conference. The 25 African parliamentarians present at the conference and representing the nations of Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe met at the suggestion of the Uganda delegation to discuss how they could stay in contact and coordinate their activities to strengthen their own parliaments. During the meeting the legislators founded the African Network for Legislative Strengthening, whose purpose is to coordinate the institutional development work of the African legislators. The members appointed a committee, with a member from each of the five nations, for the purpose of helping their legislatures "...to be champions of change in society to bring about good governance." The new association hopes to mount training programs to equip legislators to play a leading role in strengthening representation and to formulate, sponsor, and encourage cross-country exchanges among African legislatures. This group, and other legislators present at the conference, expressed keen interest in sharing experiences amongst themselves, in addition to sharing experiences from the West, as a way of developing their own institutions.

The increasing pace of change in legislatures worldwide is encouraged by information sharing across borders. Kenya's Parliamentary Service Commission, the parliamentary body responsible for the parliament's institutionalization, was developed with input from Ugandan MPs. An East African regional

parliament, whose members will be the nations of Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda, is also being established. A legislative forum already exists as a part of the Southern African Development Community. A number of Latin American regional organizations exist ranging from regional parliaments to associations of legislators, such as Foro de Presidentes de Poderes Legislativos de Centroamérica.

C. Donor Considerations

Donor involvement in legislative strengthening activities has increased dramatically since the 1996 Santa Cruz legislative strengthening conference. An increasing number of service providers and donors are involved in such projects including USAID, the Organization of American States, Inter-American Development Bank, United Nations Development Programme, World Bank, and the Inter-parliamentary Union (all of which were represented at the conference).

Strategic decisions to assist legislatures: The issues of when donors should assist a legislature and to which legislatures donors should give priority received a lot of attention throughout the conference. In addition, a session, “Conducting Legislative Assessments,” focused specifically on these questions. Despite the attention the subject received, there was little consensus achieved. Although there was not much debate about the sorts of questions that need to be considered when assessing the needs of a legislature—about the constitution and institutional structure, the vision legislative leaders have for their institution, the interests of other actors, and the role the legislature can play in deciding on important reforms—participants did debate over the methodology of carrying out a legislative assessment. One person argued that assessment teams should involve as much as possible host-country experts. Another contended that democratizing legislatures should determine their own needs. A third responded that, because legislatures in developing countries tend to focus on material needs, as opposed to political or training needs, and because donors have their own interests, the latter option was not particularly feasible.

Speakers also emphasized that legislative strengthening is not a one-size-fits-all or a “cookie cutter” exercise. Indeed, donors must take the time to understand the political culture of the nation with which they are working; they should be sure that the program they recommend meets the needs of the legislature, perhaps by allowing the host legislature to play an important role in assessing its own needs. Legislative strengthening projects have not always sufficiently analyzed and taken into account the way traditional political cultures interact with a country’s institutions and laws. It has often been assumed (and often incorrectly) that a “technically sound” project, i.e., one that focuses on training and developing institutional capacity, captures all of the factors that affect the potential for change. It was noted, however, that the reform of a legislature does not start from a clean slate. Cultural rules and practices may undermine laws on the books. In the case of Angola, for example, the tradition of deferring to “chiefs” tended to dampen efforts to demand greater accountability from legislative leaders. In addition, many democratizing legislatures are entering uncharted territory without a clear picture of what the new institution should look like or what their roles and responsibilities should be. The tendency has often been to rely on what worked in the past—even though that means utilizing authoritarian means and methods—until new models are developed and adopted.

The host-country legislature should be in “the driver’s seat:” One participant noted that there “...is an overriding need to build a culture of parliamentarianism over the long term, as opposed to short-term programs that may satisfy only those who are currently in office and not meet the needs of the parliament as an institution.” This raises serious issues for donors that challenge them to develop more creative or innovative approaches to providing assistance to legislatures.

One idea, suggested in a variety of contexts, is to work with, and to help develop if necessary, legislative modernization boards. Modernization boards are legislative committees that deal with the institutional

development issues of legislatures, are able to make long-term institutional development commitments, and speak for the legislature in its dealings with donors. Representatives from Bolivia, Kenya, Mexico, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Uganda, and Zimbabwe all testified to the utility of these groups for the modernization and institutionalization of their legislatures. Each of these nations has used such boards in initiating and carrying out legislative reforms, with greater or lesser success. One key to successful modernization boards is multi-party representation and involvement.

Along similar lines, the framework for managing policy implementation³ presented at the conference was touted by one legislator as a model to be used by reforming legislatures to make their reform process easier.

Donor coordination: One speaker commented that there was an overcrowding of assistance providers in the field as well as a lack of coordination among those providing assistance. Another commented on how difficult it is to actually achieve successful donor coordination. At the same time, there are examples of successful donor coordination; Mozambique was cited as a case in point.

Regular communication and information exchange is one clear method to assure successful donor coordination. Legislatures can also contribute to donor coordination by formulating legislative development plans. These broad plans detail the long-term development of the legislature and provide a comprehensive description of the needs of a legislature. Once a legislative development plan exists, legislative leaders (or, perhaps more specifically, the modernization board) gain greater credibility for inviting donors to support particular aspects of the legislature's institutional development. The legislative development plan increases transparency and makes it easier for donors to coordinate their activities.

Neutrality: The perceived neutrality (or lack thereof) of the donor nation can be a barrier to participation in donor programs by the ruling party. An example given was that of Cambodia, where the Cambodian People's Party felt that the international community favored FUNCINPEC and was, therefore, suspicious of donor activities. These suspicions were overcome by the donor community through stressing the technical aspects of the project and by maintaining political party balance in all activities. Another related difficulty concerns donors supporting both the supply side (the legislature) and the demand side (civil society) in legislative strengthening projects. Guatemala's Congress initially criticized USAID for its support to "Citizens Watch," an NGO which the congress perceived as "throwing stones" at the legislature. USAID was able to solve that dilemma by bringing both sides together, ultimately allowing them to forge a strategy for working together.

Sustainability: A major concern when working with legislatures, particularly as these often have a high turnover rate, is the issue of sustainability: How can donors best contribute to institutional democratic gains achieved from one election to the next? One suggestion is to encourage the development of, and to put a significant portion of one's investment into, non-partisan permanent staff. Another suggestion is donors, when working to establish permanent staff, can seek some type of agreement in advance that those trained under donor programs will have long-term employment with the institution. Donors need to recognize, however, that staff development does not in itself always contribute to a more democratic legislature. At the very least, donors need to establish a balance between activities that strengthen democracy and those simply promote greater institutionalization. Also, investing in one area may imply support for others. New professional research staff in Uganda, for example, needed additional support for transportation and telephones if they were to be able to do their jobs.

Donor implementation issues: A number of participants—legislators, donors, and project implementers—had specific suggestions for implementing legislative projects. A key question in

considering project objectives was raised: In whose interests is strengthening taking place? Donors will support different activities and groups depending on the degree to which the legislature demonstrates the will to reform itself. Suggested guidance that arose from discussions is summarized below:

- Successful legislative development is a partnership; ideally, donors help a legislature to achieve its goals.
- A lack of political sensitivity by project implementers and the perception that donors are not neutral can cause recipient legislatures to question the intentions of those providing assistance. Meddling in the internal affairs of legislatures is counterproductive to legislative development.
- Donors and implementers should have a clear idea of the issues they face and avoid a “cookie cutter” approach to meeting the development needs of a legislature.
- Donors can build trust and confidence for future steps if they maintain a practical focus and take steps to bring rapid, practical results.
- Legislators need to understand how to use the services of new professional staff trained in legislative strengthening programs and often need training so they can use the services of new staff to best effect.
- For purposes of institutional development, it is important that the leadership support donors’ efforts to bring about change. Foreign travel can be an effective tool for building that support. When working in a multi-party environment, the leadership support should come from as broad a coalition of parties as possible.
- As political realities change, project activities will need to adjust to reflect those changes, so donors will need to be flexible.
- Many program alternatives for providing assistance often exist, and opportunities change over time. An illustrative case is that of the West Bank/Gaza: When it was no longer possible to support televised coverage of the legislature, and corruption became too hot an issue, donor assistance shifted to help legislative committees investigate and hold hearings on issues that were less controversial, such as health, firearms, and education.
- Donors should not be the only voices for reform. If they are, program activities are not likely to have much effect. Partners need not be located within the legislature; civil society and NGOs can also push for change.
- People who have gone through their own legislative modernization often command more credibility than those from donor countries. A number of participants observed that nations that had recently undergone their own legislative modernization programs were the best source of experts to assist other nations in the same process.

D. Alternative Approaches to Programming and Continuing Issues

Speakers and those who commented in the various sessions raised a number of interesting questions and issues that could have an impact on future programming in the legislative strengthening field.

Support for political parties: Questions and concerns associated with political parties and legislatures arose in session after session of the conference. Speakers acknowledged the important roles that parties—both inside and outside of the legislature—play in legislative decision making. Among the various comments were the following:

- Various participants identified the degree of centralization within political parties as a major issue, to the extent that the source of problems of legislative development may lie first and foremost with the political parties, not the legislative body, per se. One speaker called parties bottlenecks to change, in particular with regard to increasing women's representation in legislatures.
- Political party leaders in Bolivia realized that they had lost their connection to the electorate and so supported fundamental electoral changes to bring them into closer contact with constituents. While the parties have been willing to accept these reforms, they have not been willing to loosen their control over their members, so that deputies' loyalties to their parties have continued to outweigh incentives to represent the concerns of constituents.
- Political parties in the UK have become less ideological and more responsive to voters' demands.

Donors need to reconsider how they deal with political parties. Most assistance to parties has been to improve their organizational development or their ability to conduct campaigns and oversee elections. Donors need to develop modes of assistance to parties in the legislature that strengthen their ability to fulfill their functions of representation, lawmaking, and oversight, but are at the same time non-partisan and equitable. One speaker noted that USAID assistance to NGOs dwarfs assistance to political parties and even to legislatures. He called for more assistance for political parties, even if it is provided at the expense of support to NGOs. Other speakers requested that specific recognition be given to the fact that parties play such a dominant role in legislative decision making. Exactly what kind of support ought to be provided to parties was not discussed at length.

Regional programming: Another common theme was regional programming for legislative strengthening. Participants from Latin America suggested that regional legislative associations could play a greater role in assisting the development of legislatures and that they receive support to do so. African legislators present suggested that the relatively infrequent worldwide conferences on legislative strengthening be supplemented with similar regional conferences. They made the point that efforts to resolve common problems and confront issues frequently faced by legislatures at similar stages of development could be done most successfully by regional associations.

Support for subnational legislatures: Participants raised questions about the similarities and differences between national and subnational legislatures, and about the extent of donor support these more local bodies receive. Participants pointed to the possibility of building connections between national and subnational legislatures. There also needs to be increased understanding of the ways programming will differ between the two levels as well as of the roles and powers attributed to deliberative bodies at different government levels.

Executive-legislative relations: Executive-legislative relations were discussed as a theme for more program focus. Given that executives often have a near monopoly on the information needed for drafting bills and conducting oversight, one objective of assisting legislative research projects is to decrease legislative dependence on the executive for information. The USAID project in Romania worked with both the legislature and the Ministry of Finance to bring them together to review the national budget. One person noted, "If it takes two to tango, then it is often necessary to provide dance lessons to both

partners.” That is, it might not be sufficient to assist only the legislature in fulfilling its role in the budget process; it may also be necessary to help the executive, and thereby better enable the executive and legislative bodies to cooperate with the other.

The communications media and the legislature: Assisting the communications media to enable them to play a more constructive role in their dealings with the legislature was another suggestion for programming. The media’s capacity to build up or tear down a legislature’s reputation makes it an excellent candidate for support. At the same time, as noted earlier, legislators need to learn better how to utilize the media for their own ends, particularly in terms of public relations, civic education, and coalition-building.

Appendix A: Conference Agenda

SECOND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON LEGISLATIVE STRENGTHENING
June 5-8, 2000

Wintergreen Resort, Virginia, USA
Sponsored by USAID's Office of Democracy and Governance

MONDAY, June 5, 2000

6:00 PM

Welcome

Mr. James E. Vermillion
Deputy Director, Office of Democracy and Governance, USAID

Keynote

The Role of Legislatures in Democratizing Countries and the Challenges They Face in Fulfilling that Role

Mr. Anders Johnsson
Secretary General of the Inter-parliamentary Union (IPU), Switzerland

TUESDAY, June 6, 2000

9:00 AM

General Session

Welcome and Overview of Conference

Mr. James E. Vermillion
Deputy Director, Office of Democracy and Governance, USAID

9:15-10:30 AM

General Session

Representation as the Fundamental Role for Democratic Legislatures

Dr. Michael Mezey
Professor of Political Science, DePaul University

Moderator: Mr. James E. Vermillion
Deputy Director, Office of Democracy and Governance, USAID

11:00 AM-1:00 PM

General Session

How do Political and Institutional Factors Affect Representation?

Dr. Scott Morgenstern
Duke University

Dr. Shaheen Mozaffar
Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, USAID

Moderator: Mr. James E. Vermillion
Deputy Director, Office of Democracy and Governance, USAID

Understanding Representation: Implications for Legislative Strengthening

1:00 -3:00 PM

Lunch

History and Development of the Virginia State Legislature

Hon. Hunter B. Andrews

Former Majority Leader, Virginia State Legislature

3:00-5:00 PM

Concurrent Discussion Groups

Conducting Legislative Assessments in Different Political Contexts

Mr. John K. Johnson

International Development Group, State University of New York

Ms. Susan M. Benda

National Democratic Institute for International Affairs

Dr. William Robinson

Congressional Research Service

Moderator: Mr. Stephen M. Brager

Office of Democracy and Governance, USAID

Political Will and Support for Legislative Strengthening

Hon. Francisco Paoli Bolio

Speaker, Mexican House of Deputies

Hon. Frederick Shumba Hapunda

Deputy Chairman of Committees of the Whole House, Zambia

Mr. Chris George

Chief of Party, Associates for Rural Development, West Bank/Gaza

Moderator: Ms. Edith Houston

USAID/West Bank/Gaza

WEDNESDAY, June 7, 2000

8:30-10:30 AM

Concurrent Discussion Groups

Mozambique's Experience in Legislative Development

Hon. Veronica Nataniel Macamo

First Vice President, National Assembly of Mozambique

Hon. Leopoldo Ernesto

Second Vice President, National Assembly of Mozambique

Hon. Vincente Zacarias Ululu

Member of Permanent Committee, the Modernization Committee and former Second Vice President of the National Assembly of Mozambique

Hon. David Zafanias Sibambo

Secretary General, National Assembly of Mozambique

Moderator: Mr. Miguel de Brito

USAID/Mozambique

Developing Research and Bill-drafting Capabilities that Support the Representation Function

Drs. Robert and Ann Seidman

Boston University

Mr. Marc Cassidy

Chief of Party, State University of New York/Uganda

Mr. Reginald Todd

Chief of Party, University of Texas/Guatemala

Moderator: Ms. Patricia Liefert

Bureau for Europe and Eurasia, Office of Democracy and Governance, USAID

11:00 AM-1:00 PM

Concurrent Discussion Groups

Legislative Projects in (Conflict and) Post-Conflict Societies

Mr. Mauricio Herrera

USAID/El Salvador

Mr. Yinka Oyinlola

USAID/Angola

Mr. Keith Schulz

Former Legal Advisor in West Bank/Gaza and Cambodia

Moderator: Dr. Tom Wolf

USAID/Kenya

Committees and Representation

Mr. Basem Masri

Consultant to Palestine Legislative Council

Hon. Alfonso Ferrufino

Former Second Vice President of Bolivia House of Deputies, current Director of the Fundación de Apoyo al Parlamento y a la Participación Ciudadana

Ms. Christine Owre

Chief of Party, National Democratic Institute for International Affairs/Malawi

Moderator: Ms. Ketty Makharashvili

USAID/Georgia

Implementing Legislation: Lessons From USAID's Implementing Policy Change Project

Dr. Derick W. Brinkerhoff

Abt Associates Inc.

Ms. Pat A. Fn'Piere (panelist and moderator)

Office of Democracy and Governance, USAID

Moderator: Ms. Pat A. Fn'Piere (panelist and moderator)

Office of Democracy and Governance, USAID

3:00 PM-5:00 PM

Concurrent Discussion Groups

Developing Budget Making and Oversight Capabilities

Mr. Frank Mauro

Director, New York Fiscal Policy Institute

Hon. Dan Ogalo and Hon. Salaamu Musumba

Members of Parliamentary Commission, Uganda

Dr. Joel Jutkowitz

Development Alternatives International, Inc.

Moderator: Mr. Jene Thomas

USAID/Mexico

Legislatures' Roles in Defense and National Security Issues

Dr. Pablo Martinez

Chief of Staff, Senate Defense Committee, Argentina

Hon. Guma Gumisiriza

Parliamentary Commission, Uganda

Dr. Mark Kramer

Harvard University

Moderator: Ms. Keri Eiesenbeis

Office of Democracy and Governance, USAID

The Roles of Parties in Legislatures

Dr. Ronald Shaiko

American University

Hon. Frederick Shumba Hapunda

Deputy Chairman of Committees of the Whole House, Zambia

Dr. John Hemery

Centre for Political and Diplomatic Studies, UK

Moderator: Mr. Yinka Oyinlola

USAID/Angola

THURSDAY, June 8, 2000

8:30-10:00 AM

General Session

Improving Access to Decision-Making

Dr. William Culver

State University of New York/Plattsburgh

Hon. Alfonso Ferrufino

Former Second Vice President of Bolivia House of Deputies, current Director of the Fundación de Apoyo al Parlamento y a la Participación Ciudadana

Hon. Dan Ogalo
Member of the Parliamentary Commission, Uganda

Dr. Simel Esim
International Center for Research on Women, Washington, D.C.

Moderator: Dr. Cate Johnson
Office of Women and Development, USAID

10:30 AM-12:00 PM

Concurrent Discussion Groups

Technology and Representation

Mr. Guillermo Garcia
Chief of Party, State University of New York/Nicaragua

Dr. William Robinson
Congressional Research Service

Moderator: Ms. Dana Ott
Bureau for Africa, Office of Sustainable Development, USAID

Roles NGOs Play in Representing Citizen Interests

Ms. Sheila Villaluz
Executive Director, Center for Legislative Development, Philippines

Hon. María Lourdes Bolaños
Legislative Modernization Committee, National Assembly of Nicaragua

Ms. Kate Head
Political consultant, Washington

Moderator: Mr. Michael Eddy
USAID/Nicaragua

Legislatures and Decentralization

Mr. Hal Lippman
Center for Development Information and Evaluation, USAID

Dr. Oleksandr Piskun
USAID/Ukraine

Ms. Ellie Valentine
Chief of Party, Indiana University/Ukraine

Dr. Karl Kurtz
National Conference of State Legislatures

Moderator: Dr. Jan Emmert
USAID/Bangladesh

2:00 PM-4:00 PM

Concurrent Discussion Groups

Institutional Development in a Political Environment

Ms. Edith Houston
USAID/West Bank/Gaza

Understanding Representation: Implications for Legislative Strengthening

Mr. Robert Balkin
Chief of Party, State University of New York/Mexico

Mr. Miguel de Brito
USAID/Mozambique

Moderator: Ms. Jennifer L. Windsor
Director, Office of Democracy and Governance, USAID

Legislative Strengthening from the Inside: Legislators' Perspective on Issues Affecting Democratic Institutional Development

Moderator: Hon. Michael Mataure
Former Member of Parliament, Zimbabwe

4:00-5:00 PM

Review of Key Themes, Continuing Debates, Useful Lessons, and Next Steps

Ms. Jennifer L. Windsor
Director, Office of Democracy and Governance, USAID

Endnotes

¹ The Tinker Foundation funded a collaboration between the State University of New York at Plattsburgh and the Fundación de Apoyo al Parlamento y a la Participación Ciudadana (FUNDAPPAC) of Bolivia. The project is entitled Bolivia Representation and Governability: the Single-member District Deputy 1997-1999.

² District magnitudes are the number of seats representing a district.

³ USAID's Implementing Policy Change (IPC) project has developed, over the last nine years, a methodology for encouraging that policy reforms are put into practice. For more information, contact Pat A. Fn'Piere, Office of Democracy and Governance, USAID. The IPC web site is <http://ipc.msi-inc.com>.

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